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REPORT ON THE FOREST INSECT SITUATION FOR 1929

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SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, CALIF.
OCTOBER 18, 1929

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REPORT ON THE FOREST INSECT SITUATION FOR 1929

Mr. J. M. Miller, Senior Forest Entomologist, Bureau of Entomology, and the Acting Park Forester made a survey of the most accessible portions of the Park forests in order to compare forest insect depredations with conditions noted in 1928, and to inaugurate the annual fall reconnaisance

The forests in general are quite healthy but there are a few areas where conditions warrant a careful yearly inspection as the number of infested trees indicates the possibility of insect epidemic flare-up

Mention was made on the insect situation in the Kern country in the report submitted for that tour of inspection.

HORSE CREEK AREA

Extending southward from Horse Creek in the southeastern portion of the Park there is about twelve square miles (measured air line) of lodgepole pine and meadow land. The trees in this area are practically clear of beetles except at Horse Creek where the number of insect killed trees is very conspicuous. Comparison of the number of dead trees to those now infested with beetles(mountain pine beetle) indicates as increase in the number of trees infested over the last three or four years.

Over this entire southeastern part of the Park the trees are mature and are fine examples of the size to which this species may grow if unmolested. This maturity, however, presents a dangerous situation because mature trees are more vulnerable to insect attacks than young rapidly growing trees. The infested area near Horse Creek, therefore, is a small infection which may spread like poison throughout that body of timber when the conditions are right for rapid insect development.

An insect infestation here would result in a serious fire menace because of the great numbers of dead trees both standing and fallen. Lodgepole pine by its high pitch content resists decay for many years, thus causing a fire hazard extending over a long period of time. When the mature trees are killed , the young growth comes up very thickly--so dense that they become growth locked--a conditions which seriosly retards their growth and offers increased fire hazard.

ORIOLE LAKE-MILK RANCH PEAK AREA

Yellow pine is the predominating tree in this area and is now infested in epedemic proportions. The area is partially outside the Park on private land and partly sithin the Park on privately owned land. Furthermore, this part of the Park is slightly used by the public so that control measures are not warranted unless the dead trees create a fire hazard.

If the infestation continues to increase as it has done during the past two seasons, it may very easily spread into the Atwell country which is widely used portion of the Park and the dead trees would add to the fire hazard here because this area borders on the dangerous brush region.

ATWELL AREA

During 1927 and 1928, there were considerable numbers of yellow pine and sugar pine being killed by bark beetles. The inspection of this year, however, shows a decrease in the infested trees so that the situation reqires no action. However, as a result of past infestations there is a considerable number of dead trees along the road and dead trees stand out prominently in the general forest cover.

MARBLEFORK BASIN AREA

Here the forest is surprisingly free of insect killed trees A distinct decrease is noticeable in the number of discolored trees compared to the number observed last year.

WILLOW MEADOW AREA

A survey in the summer of 1928 of this region indicated a situation in lodgepole warranting treatment, which was to done the spring of 1929. An inspection in the spring, however, did not reveal enough trees to necessitate control measures. Observations this fall disclosed a drop in the number of infested trees so that no control steps will be taken.

Treatment measures were to be taken at Willow Meadow because of its close proximity to Lodgepole Camp which was treated in the fall of 1928. As there was no spread to Lodgepole Camp and because of the slight fire hazard and the small amount of tourist use , no measures of control are necessary.

It is interesting to note that the red fir is replacing the lodgepole pine at Willow Meadow so that should all the lodgepole pine be exterminated in that area, there would be an adequate and more enduring forest cover created by the red fir. For this reason, it seems reasonable to refrain from control measures at Willow Meadow unless the situation becomes so serious that neighboring lodgepole pine area are threatened by migrating beetles.

LODGEPOLE CAMP AREA

This is the only area in Sequoia National Park that has been treated for bark beetles and a record kept of the results.

In October of 1928, 43 lodgepole pines infested with mountain pine beetle were felled and burned. An inspection in October of 1929 uncovered three trees which should be treated. The results of the 1928 treatment prove conclusively the benfit of control measures. By eliminating these three trees, it will be interesting to note if there are any beetle trees among the lodgepole pine next year. The 1928 clean-up, at least, has resulted in a condition that will be easy to keep in hand.

Altho it was known that there were jefrey pine in Lodgepole Camp that should have been treated in 1928, treatment of these trees was forgone in favor of the lodgepole pine because both could not be treated before stormy weather.

The 1929 reconnaisance disclosed twelve jefrey pine that should be removed. A thorough search will reveal more than these, but even this number indicates that the jeffrey pine beetles is quite active, particularly when we consider that this area is barely a mile long and about an eigth of a mile wide, sparsely covered with trees, and a camp ground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Altho the area south of Horse Creek is not extensively travelled by Park trail parties and requires no camp grounds and unmarred scenery, it should be closely watched because an epedemic in the lodgepole pine would create a serious fire hazard by leaving many dead trees and dense thickets of inflammable young growth.

2. Because the Oriole Lake-Milk Ranch Peak area is not important for its scenery or camp grounds, control measures need not be taken, but a careful watch should be maintained to check a possible spread into the Atwell territory where a great number of dead trees would be a serious marr to the landscape.

3. By careful observations at Willow Meadow, it can be determined if the insect situation is becoming serious enough to threaten neighboring lodgepole pine areas, and therefore require control measures. As a possible future camp ground Willow Meadow needs no treatment because/the abundant red fir forest cover. / of

4. With the opening of the new road into Lodgepole Camp next year, that camp will become very popular. The number

of trees on this area are now inadequate so that the loss of even one tree is serious. For this reason controlmeasures will be started at once in an effort to suppress the jeffrey beetle and eliminate the mountain pine beetle.

5. During the reconnaisance of the forest insect situation, the number of dead trees along the roads and in the camp grounds was very noticeble. These dead trees are very disfiguring and also dangerous. Cutting the trees has frequently been consudered but lack of funds has always prevented the work being done, except the few dead trees which are cut each year for the government fuel supply.

Tree men workingnunder the suppervision of the Park Forester could be employed all summer felling dead trees and cutting them up into fuel wood. These men could also treat the insect infested trees that the Forester would spot, so that in this way the number of dying trees would decrease because of the elimination of beetle trees that would be a source of infection to the healtny trees. As the beetle trees are eventually cut after they are dead, an added benefit would be derived, besides removing a scenic blemish and furnishing a wood supply, by cutting them while the beetles are present and thus retarding the number of trees which die each year.

Three men concentrating on trees felling and Beetle work would cost no more than using several men for about a month each year preparing fire wood, and yet they would be immediately available to combat a serious beetle infestation.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Been,
Acting Park Forester

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letter to F C C

Transfer 150 from Sequoia to Gen. Grant -;

Keep 2000 for Yosemite.

Larsen 300 00 work will depend on availability of trained men to direct work.

Send Larsen 2 yellow pine control pictures

1 panoramic yp loss picture

4th for Bacon 10th May, — 100 00 to Melvelve
Johnson — 125 00 " George, June 6;
Denbrow — 125 00 May, 15.